

VZCZCXRO1085
RR RUEHRG
DE RUEHSO #0678/01 3541705
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 191705Z DEC 08
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8798
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9950
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 4256
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 8950
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 3348
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3595
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 2819
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2595
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 4004
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1245

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SAO PAULO 000678

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G/TIP, BARBARA FLECK

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [KTIP](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: SAO PAULO STATE ORGANIZES TIP MEETING

¶1. (U) Summary: The State of Sao Paulo and the Secretary of Justice and Citizen Defense organized a broad-based meeting for NGOs and government agencies dedicated to fighting Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Sao Paulo on December 16. Panelists stressed their commitment to "institutionalizing" the fight against TIP and gave examples of recent successes, including the establishment of a comprehensive database and an increase in prosecutions. Additionally, Sao Paulo announced an inter-departmental partnership to raise awareness of and combat TIP. Poloff presented U.S. perspectives on TIP and publicized G/TIP's recently released request for proposals for the 2009 anti-TIP grants, which was received very positively by participants. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Office to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is part of the Sao Paulo State Secretary of Justice and Citizen Defense, hosted a conference addressing Trafficking and the Sexual Exploitation of Minors on December 16. Panelists included Dr. Fabio Bechara, Assistant to the Sao Paulo State Attorney General; Dr. Mauricio Correa of the National Secretariat of Justice; Dr. Leticia Teixeira de Azevedo, Project Analyst for the ORSA Foundation; Dr. Debora Aranha, Coordinator for the Winrock Institute; Dr. Priscila Siqueira Coordinator for the Service for Marginalized Women; Dr. Analia Belisa Ribeiro Coordinator for the Office to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons and Political Officers from the U.S. Consulate General. "INSTITUTIONALIZING" THE FIGHT

¶3. (U) Bechara and Correa opened the conference by addressing the continued commitment within the State of Sao Paulo to combating TIP. Bechara noted that, in the past, the focus on TIP had wavered from one administration to the next and progress to educate the public and combat TIP had been dependent on having a vociferous champion within the state. He observed that officials today better understand the problems associated with TIP and are now laying the groundwork to "de-personalize" the fight against TIP and make it part of the institutional fabric of the legal system.

¶4. (U) Correa added that significant progress had been made on a national database to track TIP. The database tracks victim information such as city of origin, how they were trafficked and the types of work they do once they arrive at their destination. It also records trafficker information including the source of victims and the fees received from this illicit activity. The database enables authorities to profile both the victim and the trafficker and gain a better understanding of the criminal network. Ultimately, officials hope to use the information from this database to track and attack the profits associated with TIP.

CO-OPERATIVE CAMPAIGNS

¶5. (U) Both Bechara and Correa noted the need for a multi-agency approach to combat TIP and announced a cooperative agreement signed by the National Secretariat of Justice, the Sao Paulo state Secretary of Justice and Citizen Defense and the Ministry of Tourism. Ribeiro noted that this partnership is supported by 33 NGOs and public institutions and was formed to raise awareness of

TIP and the adolescent sex trade through targeted public service announcements. This campaign will kick-off before Carnaval in February 2009 and will emphasize the quilombos (afro-brazilian communities founded by escaped slaves) as they have a high incidence of trafficking victims. In addition, organizers want to educate taxi and truck drivers and enlist them as front-line allies in the fight against TIP. Law enforcement officials have long noted a disproportionately high number of taxi and truck drivers among the traffickers and now hope to address this problem through education and with targeted ads and warnings in taxis and on trucks.

MORE PROSECUTIONS

¶16. (U) Marcia Heloisa Mendonca Ruiz, Sao Paulo Civil Police Chief and a frequent interlocutor for the Consulate on TIP issues, commented that her office had had some recent success prosecuting TIP related crimes. She noted that in a recent internal trafficking case, police brought the trafficker to court on charges of sexual exploitation of a minor. Through Mendonca's involvement in the case, they subsequently were able to add trafficking charges to the case which is still pending. While she was pleased to add the trafficking charge, she noted that her office must still do more to educate judges and the law enforcement community about TIP. Her words were echoed by Texeira de Azevedo in a subsequent panel. Texeira shared success stories of several victims rescued from prostitution rings. While she noted with satisfaction that police took the cases seriously and immediately obtained assistance for the victims, she also observed that the traffickers were arrested and held on prostitution charges; none were held for trafficking which would have carried a much stiffer penalty (15 versus five years in prison).

OTHER STATES FOLLOWING SAO PAULO'S LEAD

¶17. (U) One of the panelists shared the results of a study recently

SAO PAULO 00000678 002 OF 002

completed by the Winrock Institute in cooperation with the State of Bahia. Winrock's researchers interviewed trafficking victims in an attempt to profile the types of people who are trafficked to Bahia in the sex trade. They found that most victims are adolescent girls between 9 and 15 years of age who are trafficked from the interior of Bahia State. Interestingly, the study also noted that the vast majority of "clients" served by the interviewees were Bahian locals or domestic Brazilian tourists. Aranha observed that while child sex tourism was often publicly seen as the purview of foreign tourists, their studies show that, in Bahia at least, this is not the case.

U.S. SEEN AS AN ALLY, NOT AN INTERLOPER

¶18. (U) Poloff made a presentation on U.S. TIP policy that emphasized how the USG's present-day emphasis on fighting TIP represents a continuation of the United States's opposition to slavery. Conference attendees paid close attention to the functioning of the U.S. TIP Report Tier system and were interested in the grant possibilities. (One organization followed up immediately by requesting a meeting with the Consulate.) Sao Paulo participants also clearly did not/not perceive U.S. TIP policy as interference in Brazil's sovereign affairs, a sentiment expressed repeatedly during the question and answer session that followed Poloff's presentation.

¶19. (U) Comment: Sao Paulo continues to be a center of anti-TIP sentiment and activity. The conference strengthened links between Federal, State and Municipal authorities and a wide variety of NGOs engaged in the fight against trafficking. It also featured heartening news about increased prosecutions and solid evidence that many in Sao Paulo have a positive view of U.S. TIP policies. The announcement of G/TIP's grants was icing on the cake for a successful conference and successful participation by the USG. End Comment.

¶10. (U) This cable has been cleared by the Embassy in Brasilia.